



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen

FROM: Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

DATE: February 7, 2011

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from February 2, 2011 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Wednesday February 2, 2011 at 9:00AM in City Council Chambers at the Community Development Building, 409 South Main Street.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), Brad Reed (Public Works), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Len Van Wyk (citizen member), MPO Greg Deeds (Police member), Sgt. William Keller (Police), Reggie Smith (Public Transportation)

Citizen Guests Present: None

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

New Business

1. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee update

Ms. Dang announced that the summary of the January 24th Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee is posted on the City website.

2. 602 Chicago Avenue accident review

Ms. Dang shared the police report for an accident that occurred in the early morning of January 2nd wherein a driver fell asleep at the wheel and struck a home. The owner of the home that was struck claimed that many near misses with his home have occurred over the last five years. City staff found no similar, reported accidents in this area in the past five years. Mr. Van Wyk asked if any changes are under consideration to calm traffic on Chicago Avenue near the school, such as the painted lines that are on Central Avenue. Ms. Dang explained that traffic calming measures are not being considered on Chicago Avenue at this time, but bike lanes will be marked between Gay Street and Rockingham Drive as part of the Safe Routes to School program improvements for Waterman Elementary School. The Commission recommended that no change be made, as this accident was an isolated incident that could not have been prevented.

3. Review of 'No Right on Red' restrictions on South Main Street and on Cantrell Avenue

Mr. Reed explained that the City Manager requested that Public Works and this Commission look into removing the Right Turn on Red (RTOR) restrictions around JMU during slower times of day. The following preliminary recommendations were presented for consideration, but will need detailed study before being finalized and would not be implemented until campus gating takes place at the beginning of the fall 2011 semester:

South Main Street & Bluestone Drive – Remove the exclusive pedestrian phase from the traffic signal along with all RTOR restrictions. When gating occurs on Bluestone Drive, the westbound movement will be practically eliminated, thus removing vehicles from the most trafficked pedestrian-vehicle conflict point. The other approaches have either low right turn traffic or few pedestrians, making them much less of a concern for potential conflicts.

South Main Street & Grace Street – Leave the crosswalk as-is, but place a time-of-day limit on the RTOR restrictions. Vehicles would be allowed to turn left on red during evening hours when foot traffic is at a minimum. Times for this regulation will be determined through further study.

Cantrell Avenue & South Mason Street – Remove the exclusive pedestrian phase from the traffic signal along with all RTOR restrictions. Enhanced pedestrian safety features will be considered for pedestrians crossing Cantrell Avenue due to the heavy right turn volumes coming off of South Mason Street.

The Commission agreed that Public Works should proceed with these studies and had no major objections to the preliminary recommendations. Results of the studies will be presented to the Commission once completed.

Old Business

4. Sheetz on Vine Street – left turn issue update

Mr. Williams requested that the Commission write a letter of support to City Council for the installation of delineators on Vine Street to eliminate the left turn safety problems at the Sheetz entrance. Sheetz has yet to agree to install measures to restrict left turns within their entrance, so the City is forced to move forward with this solution. Public Works plans to present the matter to Council on February 22nd if Sheetz does not respond.

5. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Old Town update

Ms. Dang shared that there was a meeting on January 18th at 6 PM of the neighborhood representative group to prepare a presentation for City Council and discuss next steps in the process. The Council presentation will take place at the February 22nd meeting.

6. Warsaw Avenue & Harrison Street traffic signal study update

Mr. Reed explained that the City has been observing the operation of this intersection while in flash mode and shared some preliminary thoughts with the Commission. A formal recommendation for improvements to this intersection will be presented at the next meeting.

7. Traffic signal removal study (Mason Street & Bruce Street)

Mr. Reed shared that the traffic signal at Mason Street & Bruce Street was removed from service on February 1st.

Other Business/ Announcements

8. Reminder: North End Greenway presentation at joint TSAC/Planning Commission meeting on February 9, 7pm, at City Council Chambers (see attachments at www.harrisonburgva.gov/tsc)

Ms. Dang requested that the Commission review the North End Greenway documents at the above link prior to attending the meeting.

9. Sidewalks on North Main Street

Sgt. Keller mentioned that sidewalks may want to be considered on North Main Street to accommodate the foot traffic he has witnessed there. Ms. Dang explained that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan calls for sidewalks in this area, but funding is not currently available.

10. Public Transportation Announcements

Mr. Smith announced that the Public Transportation Department has signed a contract with NextBus to provide real-time bus arrival/departure times to its customers via voice, text, and web services. The system will likely be in operation around the beginning of JMU's fall 2011 semester.

Mr. Smith also announced that 7 new buses will be delivered this summer, 4 of which were planned as replacements, but will instead be additions due to increasing passenger demand. Bus passenger increases about 11-12 % compared to last year and have increased 5-10% each year over the past 5 years. Mr. Smith went on to explain that JMU will be granting Public Transportation use of the full Godwin lot for a university transfer station and that the department is working with Rose's on North Mason Street to move the downtown transfer station to a section of their parking lot. The existing downtown transfer station is located behind the Hardesty-Higgins House.

MPO Deeds asked if more buses will be made available for JMU football games in the future, as there seems to be a lot of demand. Mr. Smith said that he is working on a contract with JMU to run a service similar to that utilized during graduation, where buses would pick up passengers from hotels and major gathering points such as the K-Mart parking lot.

11. Mr. Van Wyk shared his disappointment in the lack of sidewalk clearing during the last snow storm, as has also been a problem in past years. The Commission agreed and mentioned that there may need to be improvements made to enforcing businesses to clear sidewalks along their frontage.

Adjourn